

MEMORANDUM

THE WHITE HOUSE
WASHINGTON

see note
p. 2

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July 28, 1972

MEMORANDUM FOR: HENRY A. KISSINGER
FROM: AL HAIG
SUBJECT: Kurdish Problem

Attached is a memorandum prepared by Helms which outlines the results of his and Kennedy's discussions with the Kurdish representatives and contains a proposal for U.S. action. The proposal provides for two categories of assistance to Barzani:

-- Financial and Munitions.

-- On the Financial side, the proposal would provide, in addition to contributions from Iran, [REDACTED] \$3 million from the U.S. over one year. Helms would furnish this [REDACTED] but with the full knowledge of the Shah and Barzani.

-- With respect to munitions, the U.S. would supply roughly \$2 million in supplies (exclusive of transportation costs). The ordnance would be delivered [REDACTED] to Iran for turnover to the Kurds. Details on costing are at Enclosure 3 of the attached memorandum.

Helms and Kennedy both favor support for Barzani. A case could be made that it is more important than ever due to the recent events in Egypt which will probably result in more intense Soviet efforts in Iraq. At the same time, sensitivity increases immeasurably in the light of Soviet paranoia resulting from events in Egypt.

Procedurally, we have two options:

-- Circumvent the 40 Committee and go directly by memorandum to the President and then deal solely with OMB and Helms, or

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-- Inform 40 Committee principals only -- Johnson, Rush, the Chairman JCS and Helms -- but avoid any paper work and tell them that the President wants this done.

Recommendation:

I think we should pursue the latter course in the event something blows and we could insist that established procedures were followed. Furthermore, I doubt very much that the operation can be conducted without its surfacing in official channels at some point.

If you agree, I will have this converted to a memorandum to the President for your approval and advise him that we are instructing the principals only of his decision and move with CIA and OMB, to get the action accomplished.

Approve HK

Disapprove _____

Attachments

*Let it done must not by handwriting
memo to principals*

HK

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Date: 6/6/2006

18 July 1972

MEMORANDUM


SUBJECT: Assistance to Iraqi Kurdish Leader,
Mulla Mustafa Barzani

1. This memorandum describes a proposal for covert assistance to the Iraqi Kurdish leader, Mulla Mustafa Barzani. Attached are the following: (1) an inventory of the proposed ordnance for the Kurds (Attachment A) and (2) an estimate of the situation entitled Prospects and Problems of Assistance to the Kurds (Attachment B).

2. Material assistance required by Mulla Mustafa Barzani to continue resistance to the Ba'thi regime in Baghdad falls into two main categories, (a) financial and (b) ordnance.

3. With regard to financial assistance, our intelligence has consistently placed the yearly requirement for financing the Pish Mirga (Barzani's guerrilla army), with a strength of 25,000, at approximately \$18 million. While Barzani's recent emissaries placed their total annual requirements at \$60 million, this figure envisioned a full-scale military offensive involving 60,000 troops and included the cost of a government infrastructure and certain social services to the Kurdish population. It is not recommended that we encourage or support such an ambitious, highly provocative, and probably impractical scale of activity, which would exceed the limits of covert capability.

4. Of the \$18 million required for guerrilla warfare of an essentially defensive nature, we have indications that Iran may be prepared to fund half this sum, or \$9 million.



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5. In the financial subsidy category, it is recommended that we provide Barzani with [REDACTED]

-- \$3 million over one year's time. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Both Barzani and the Shah would, however, be witting of our contribution. While this figure is in some ways arbitrary, it is arrived at in the conviction that (a) at least half the total should be borne by Iran, whose equities as neighbor to Iraq are particularly high, and (b) the balance might well be split [REDACTED].

6. In the category of ordnance assistance, the Agency now has in stock the additional arms and ammunition required by the Kurds. This ordnance is of either non-attributable, foreign manufacture or of US manufacture normally stocked by Iraq or Iran, except for artillery (ground and anti-aircraft) and tanks, which we should probably not in any event undertake to supply. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] Thus the total cost of ordnance support is \$2,004,190, exclusive of shipping charges. Transportation costs, [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] would be additional.

7. It is recognized that the transportation problem will be considerable. Since it is our recommendation that the ordnance be delivered [REDACTED] and thus covered by the Iranians, the feasibility and security of shipment and reception in Tehran, plus the problems of onward transport by the Iranians to Iraqi Kurdistan cannot be definitely determined without detailed exploratory consultations with a highly select few [REDACTED]

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8. The following action steps are proposed
at this time:

a. The sum of \$5,379,190.80, broken
down as follows, be used to support the
Kurds for one year's time:

(1) \$3,000,000 for financial
subsidy

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

b. Consultation [REDACTED] to
determine the exact modalities of service
reception and onward shipment to Kurdistan
of the ordnance described above.

c. [REDACTED]

d. [REDACTED]

Attachments - 2
Attachment A
Attachment B

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ATTACHMENT B

18 July 1972

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PROSPECTS AND PROBLEMS OF ASSISTANCE TO THE KURDS

The following is a preliminary estimate which sets forth in detail considerations relevant to covert USG support to the Iraqi Kurds under the leadership of Mulla Mustafa Barzani.

SUMMARY:

1. It is clearly in the interest of the USG and its friends and allies in the area that the present Iraqi regime be kept off balance, or even overthrown if that can be done without escalating hostilities on the international level. The most effective and secure means to achieve this end will be to furnish appropriate support to Barzani and the Kurds to enable them to maintain their resistance to the regime. The regime, despotic internally, is aggressively hostile in its intentions toward Iran, Kuwait, Jordan, Saudi Arabia, and the newly-formed Federation of Arab Emirates. The danger Iraqi hostility poses has become an increasingly significant factor in the area because of the steadily deepening Soviet support for Iraq, now institutionalized in the Soviet-Iraqi treaty of friendship and cooperation signed 9 April 1972. Soviet awareness of the threat Kurdish opposition represents to the Iraqi regime has been reflected recently in increased Soviet and East German pressure on Barzani to join the National Charter Front sponsored by the Soviets and the regime. Both the regime and the Soviets appreciate that if the Iraqi Army must be mobilized and redeployed for a renewed campaign against the Kurds, it is likely to become less subject to regime control, and the regime's capabilities for action against its neighbors will be reduced. Nonetheless, there are current indications that the regime may itself be preparing to take the military initiative against

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the Kurds, and the likelihood of its doing so will increase if it becomes aware of the present Kurdish approach to the USG [REDACTED] for support.

2. Whether or not the Iraqi regime chooses to initiate military action against the Kurds, the USG can covertly assist Barzani to maintain Kurdish opposition to the regime. If the Kurds are attacked by Iraqi forces, they will require ammunition for their existing stocks of arms and additional arms of compatible type without delay. USG assistance should be furnished with maximum administrative and physical security feasible in the circumstances so as to enhance plausible denial, although the multilateral context in which this assistance must be provided will inevitably entail security complications. Apart from considerations of plausible denial, the volume and type of USG financial and materiel assistance should be such as to encourage the Kurds to adhere to the kind of guerrilla operations within their mountainous redoubt at which they traditionally excel, as well as to obviate insofar as possible the risk that major Kurdish military escalation might provoke direct Soviet intervention in the conflict.

3. The provision of significant USG covert support to the Kurds will involve certain problems, including that of possible direct Soviet involvement. While Soviet intervention would jeopardize the improved relations with Iran for which the Soviets in recent years have been consistently working, Soviet readiness to pay this price to safeguard their investment and position in Iraq cannot be excluded. Another problem will be presented by Turkish sensitivity to Kurdish nationalism because of their concern for the large Kurdish minority in the eastern region of Turkey. Then there are the limitations on Barzani's influence and effectiveness among the Kurds imposed by Kurdish factionalism and divisiveness even within the Kurdish Democratic Party, of which he is the leader, as well as problems implicit in Barzani's advanced age and the lack of a suitable heir to his political powers among the Kurds. Finally, there is the complication

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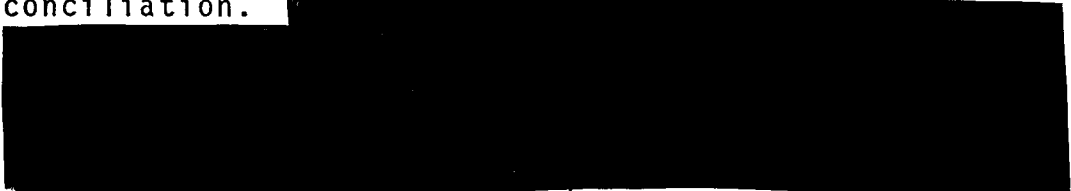
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inherent in the initiation of covert USG support to the Kurds at a time when the Department of State envisages the opening of a two-officer US Interests Section in Baghdad sometime in early fall 1972.

4. The problems notwithstanding, it is clear that unless the USG and other interested nations provide increased support to Barzani, he will have no reasonable alternative to reaching an early accommodation with the Iraqi regime -- an accommodation which would serve Soviet aims and enhance Iraq's capabilities for disruption of stability among other nations in the area. Barzani and some of the parties involved in supporting him envision Kurdish resistance as part of a larger movement including non-Kurdish Iraqi elements which would replace the radical Ba'thi regime with a government of moderation and reconciliation.



5. In anticipation of a decision to provide covert support to the Kurds, we have been planning the modalities of such support, especially the priority supply of ammunition and additional compatible armament to bolster the Kurds' defensive capability. Preliminary checks with the appropriate  component reveal that substantial quantities of arms and ammunition are available.

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SUPPORT FOR BARZANI: A PRELIMINARY ESTIMATE

PROSPECTS

1. In their discussions with our representatives, the Kurdish emissaries outlined their political, financial and intelligence requirements in considerable detail. As we analyze these requirements and explore procedures for dealing with them, we are also considering the ramifications of our developing relationship with the Kurds in order to achieve desired results with minimum risks of undesired side effects. Some aspects of the situation which will affect the level and manner of our support are discussed below. They concern Soviet support of the Ba'thi regime and government commitments under the Treaty of April 1972; the military capabilities and requirements of the Kurds; and such problems as Kurdish factionalism, Turkish hostility to the Kurds, and the modalities of maintaining contact with Mulla Mustafa Barzani and providing him with financial and logistic support.

Ba'thi-Soviet Collaboration Against Moderate Regimes and Western Interests

2. There can be no doubt that it is in the interest of ourselves, our allies, and other friendly governments in the area to see the Ba'thi regime in Iraq kept off balance and if possible overthrown, if this can be done without increasing Soviet influence in Iraq or escalating hostilities to a dangerous international level.

3. This regime has not been content with despotic control of its own territory and people. Moved by an aggressive, adventurist, pseudo-Marxist ideology, it has mounted campaigns against its neighbors and against all western interests in the Gulf. Under the leadership of Saddam Husayn Tikriti, the Iraqi Ba'thi clique has promoted

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subversion in Kuwait, Bahrain, and the Union of Arab Emirates. It has trained and dispatched saboteurs and assassins against the Shah, and tried to foment insurrections of Arab and Baluchi minorities in Iran. Ba'thi assassination squads have operated successfully in Kuwait and Beirut and have also attempted to murder a former Iraqi Prime Minister in London.

4. While Ba'thi aspirations heretofore may have seemed far beyond their capabilities, developments of the past few months suggest that they now should be taken much more seriously. For during these few months the Soviet Union has clearly revealed an intention to exploit the Iraqi regime to advance its strategic and economic interests in the Middle East. Although deducible from many earlier Soviets acts and pronouncements, Soviet strategy to gain control of the area and its resources has never before been so evident.

5. On 7 April 1972 Soviet Prime Minister Alexei Kosygin spoke at the inauguration ceremony of the North Rumaila oilfield, which has been developed with upward of 200 million dollars worth of Soviet technical assistance. He enunciated a theme which communist propaganda had been agitating since World War II, namely that the countries of the area should end the exploitation of their oil by capitalist oil companies. He hailed the pressure of national liberation movements which had forced the colonialists to withdraw in the Middle East, as in other parts of the world. Against the capitalist oil company myth that the Arabs were unable to manage their own economies, he pledged the aid of the socialist states in helping them find the experts, technicians, and scientists to solve their problems.

Soviet-Iraqi Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation

6. Two days later, on 9 April in Baghdad, Kosygin and Iraqi President Ahmad Hasan Al-Bakr signed a Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, the published provisions of which provide for coordination of their stands in the event of a threat to the peace of either party and continuing cooperation in consolidating their mutual defense capabilities. These provisions gave the Iraqi regime the prospect of Soviet support in the event of external

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attacks, and possibly even in the event of an internal insurrection. Article 9, concerning consolidating mutual defense capabilities, seems to promise the Soviet Union increased naval facilities in Iraqi Gulf ports and further access to Iraqi airfields. This Treaty serves as a reminder of a treaty negotiated by the Soviet Union with Nazi Germany 32 years ago, in which the Soviet Union declared that its territorial aspirations center south of the national territory of the Soviet Union in the direction of the Indian Ocean. (Documents on German-Soviet Policy, 1918-45, Vol XI, p. 509)

Soviet Support for Nationalization of IPC

7. Less than two months after Kosygin's Rumaila speech and the signing of the Soviet-Iraqi Treaty, the Ba'thi government on 1 June 1972 announced the nationalization of IPC. Immediately thereafter the Iraqi Foreign Minister led a delegation to Moscow to obtain Soviet assistance in avoiding the economic consequences of anticipated retaliation by western companies and governments. The Soviet news agency TASS strongly supported the nationalization of IPC, calling it a move toward liberating Iraq "from the sway of foreign capital." By 3 June Radio Moscow was broadcasting in Persian to Iran a commentary that the Iraqi nationalization of IPC should serve an example for Iran in dealing with the plundering activity of the international oil consortium. "Today we are witnessing the nationalization of assets of the imperialist oil monopoly in Iraq. Undoubtedly this will happen in other countries sooner or later. The Soviet and other socialist countries' support for the just struggle of oil-producing countries...is an important factor in strengthening the oil-producing countries' position... There is no doubt that the nationalization of IPC by Iraq will weaken the position of imperialist oil monopolies in other countries and will lead to their consolidating their struggle against those monopolies." (FBIS, Moscow in Persian to Iran 0930 GMT 3 June 1972)

Kurdish Resistance, a Stumbling Block for the Ba'this and Soviets

8. The Soviet Union obviously has attached great

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importance to getting Mulla Mustafa Barzani and his Kurdish followers to adhere to the "National Charter Front" sponsored by the Soviets and including both the Ba'th and the Communist Party of Iraq. The Kurdish emissaries and our independent sources have reported recent visits by senior Soviet officials and East German delegations to Barzani to persuade him to join the Front. The Soviets and the Ba'th evidently realize that so long as Barzani maintains an independent enclave in the north, there will always be a threat to the permanence of the unpopular dictatorship in Baghdad.

9. During the early and middle 1960's, Kurdish insurgency tied down two-thirds of the Iraqi army. This contributed to conditions which facilitated a series of successful military coups and effectively limited Iraqi capabilities for military adventures abroad against Israel, Jordan, Kuwait, and Iran. Saddam Husayn Tikriti has successfully increased Ba'thi civilian political control over the Iraqi army. If the army has to be mobilized and deployed for another campaign against the Kurds, however, it will have to be provided with increased quantities of ammunition and fuel and be given greater operational initiative. This may lessen the effectiveness of Ba'th party controls within the army and enhance the opportunities for a military coup. A recent study by the Office of Intelligence Research of the Department of State speculates that if Barzani can find sufficient outside support to renew his insurgency, the added strain of another Kurdish war could bring down the Ba'thi government.

10. Past history of the Iraqi Ba'th adventurers does not suggest that they can be placated by concessions. They exploit weakness and are likely to be deterred from their aggressive course only by fear of the consequences of failure or by being kept on the defensive.

11. The present situation, when the Ba'thi regime is faced with a serious reduction in income, and while the organized Kurdish political leadership is still disposed to resist, may be our last desperate chance to engage in a spoiling operation designed at least to harass

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the Ba'th and perhaps to contribute to conditions favorable to its replacement by elements less hostile to our interests and those of our friends in this area. We must recognize that the Ba'th may be impelled by rising Kurdish opposition to seek more support from the Soviet Union. The alternative of letting the Kurdish resistance die from lack of support, however, will mean that the Kurds will be compelled to join the Soviet-sponsored National Front, and the Ba'th will be able unhindered to pursue its offensive in the area. On balance it appears better to take the risks of keeping Kurdish resistance alive.

12. From our point of view, it is desirable to provide Barzani with sufficient encouragement and support to maintain a position not dependent on the Baghdad regime and capable of preventing final military conquest of the Kurdish areas by the Iraqi army. So long as a Kurdish redoubt exists, dissident elements in the army and on the Iraqi political scene will not despair of an opportunity eventually to overturn the regime. Maintenance of Kurdish resistance even at the defensive level will also limit the regime's capability for engaging in aggressive adventures against Iran, Jordan, and the Gulf.

Possibility of Early Iraqi Offensive Against Barzani

13. Despite hopes of mounting a major offensive against Baghdad, Barzani must know well that until he has a much more effective anti-aircraft capability and an adequate supply of defensive arms and ammunition, it will not be in his interest to engage in offensive operations which will trigger retaliatory air and ground strikes against his towns and villages.

14. Barzani's desire to avoid a premature military confrontation with the Ba'thi regime may not, however, be sufficient to prevent one being thrust upon him by the Ba'th in the very near future. [REDACTED]

[REDACTED] SAVAK has had reports that the Iraqi army has recently been training paratroops in the vicinities of Kirkuk and Mosul and that there have been two recent aerial reconnaissances of Barzani's headquarters in the

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Haji Umran area. Barzani is reported to believe an attack may be imminent and to have ordered his people to open fire on any more overflights. The Iraqi press and radio have mounted a major campaign during the past week alleging that a band of thirty men, fifteen of them Kurds, who were involved in a clash in the Sinjar area of northwestern Iraq on 3 July were a mercenary gang of imperialist stooges, puppets for monopolistic oil companies, and links in a chain of American plots against Iraq. It is also possible that due to the number of countries being approached by Barzani, the Soviet Union and the Ba'th will have become aware of Barzani's effort to obtain American support. This might reinforce Soviet and Ba'thi inclinations to take pre-emptive action against Barzani before he can strengthen his position.

Barzani's Immediate and Long Range Materiel Requirements

15. Barzani may actually have no option but a purely defensive stand and a struggle for survival. He then will need as quickly as possible ammunition for the weapons already in his hands, plus additional weapons of types with which the Kurds are already familiar. These emergency supplies should be delivered by methods and routes which combine minimum delay with as much secrecy as possible in the circumstances.

16. If Barzani can avoid an immediate Iraqi assault, we will give priority consideration to his longer range requirements under the three alternative strategies outlined by his emissaries. They projected financial and materiel requirements in terms of three possible levels of action described by them as "defensive, offensive, and revolutionary platforms."

17. The first, or "defensive platform," they said, would involve a minimal increase of outside assistance to permit their movement to preserve the status quo and resist indefinitely political, economic, and military pressures from the Ba'th.

18. The second, or "offensive platform," which is the one Barzani favors, would provide the Kurds with the

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financial and military means not only to maintain their position, but so to tie up the Ba'thi regime that it no longer would pose a military or subversive threat to its neighbors and western interests. Barzani's projection of his financial and military materiel requirements was keyed to this platform of activity.

19. The third, or "revolutionary platform," would involve the use of Kurdistan as a secure base from which to promote the overthrow of the Ba'thi regime in cooperation with other anti-regime Iraqis. The Kurdish emissaries declared that this level of activity would require little further investment beyond that of the second level, but would involve financial assistance to Arab collaborators.

20. In their discussion of the types of equipment needed for the second or offensive platform of activity, it appeared that the Kurds have some unrealistic ideas about military actions and the kinds of equipment which they could use. Their interest in tanks for action outside the mountains suggests a belief that they can engage the Iraqi army in conventional warfare. It also assumes a logistics base in Iran which would be similar to that provided by North Vietnam to the Viet Cong. To their credit, however, the Kurdish emissaries were frank in admitting the need for military advice.

21. If past experience proves anything, it is that the Kurds do best against the Iraqi army when they remain well within their mountains and engage in aggressive guerrilla tactics, hitting the Iraqis in many places and keeping them off balance. Totally lacking in air support, in armor and in heavy artillery, as they must continue to be, the Kurds cannot prevent the Iraqi army from bombarding their towns and villages or, during the summer when the roads are open, from sending armored columns to attack villages which lie along major roads through the valleys. The Kurds, with their light infantry weapons, have lateral mobility across ridges and valleys, while the army, with heavy weapons and vehicles, has mobility only up and down the valley roads. The army has virtually

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no lateral mobility from ridge to ridge across the sharp defiles.

Role of Non-Kurdish Elements in Opposing the Ba'thi Regime

22. The Kurds recognize that by themselves they cannot bring about the overthrow of the Ba'thi regime. Other forces must be brought into play to maximize the pressures on the Ba'th.

23. This calls for identification of those individuals and groups among which discontent already exists or can be stimulated, and a determination of how discontent and antagonisms can best be exploited.

24. Three prime groups for consideration are the Ba'th itself, the Iraqi military establishment, and the Iraqi political exiles.

25. Our reporting indicates that there currently is some degree of tension between President Al-Bakr and the strongman of the BPI, Saddam Husayn al Tikriti. This is an obvious area for exploitation. There are other areas of discontent within the Ba'th, for example, the privileged position of the members of the Public Relations Bureau within the party, and friction between the civilian and military wings of the party. Our information on this aspect is limited.

26. Recent purges by the BPI within the Iraqi army are bound to have heightened the elements of fear and hatred of the regime within the officer corps, but again, our information on this is limited.

27. We know more about the current group of Iraqi political exiles. A number of them have a history of insecure and unsuccessful plotting. The same may be said of the Iranians [REDACTED] in their past efforts to promote coups in Iraq.

28. Fast and systematic vetting of all non-Kurdish elements who surface as this activity develops will be essential.

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Modalities of Logistic Support for Barzani

29. In canvassing possible stocks of weapons which may be provided to the Kurds, we should give priority to weapons with which they are already supplied and to ammunition for those weapons. Second priority should be given to anti-aircraft and anti-tank weapons, including land mines and rockets, with emphasis on portability. The portability factor suggests that the Kurds should be advised to depend upon rocket and mortar-type weapons, rather than to attempt to increase their conventional artillery capabilities.

30. The Kurdish spokesmen indicated that in the event of an "offensive" phase, they envisioned the expansion of their Pish Mirga armed force to 60,000 men. There are at present only 24,000 Kurds under arms, 14,000 in the Iraqi government-paid frontier and police forces, and 10,000 in the independent Kurdish irregular units. The logistics of supporting a 60,000 man force in such an inaccessible area would be of staggering dimensions. Access by road from Iran is limited. Supply by air would be far beyond Iranian capabilities and could not be kept secret or even discreet.

31. We should bear in mind that the Kurdish request for [REDACTED] to sustain their "offensive platform" was to cover only Pish Mirga salaries, care for widows and orphans, and social and educational services -- in effect the budgetary support required to support a Kurdish state. It did not include the costs of combat, i.e., supplying weapons, ammunition, and communications equipment.

32. Coming directly on the heels of the Soviet-Iraqi Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation, massive foreign involvement could hardly be ignored by the Soviets, no matter how much they might desire to avoid complicating their smooth relations with the Shah. The Soviets have invested heavily in their position in Iraq and would not readily see it lost. The Ba'thi regime has given them more than they ever had before. The Treaty, even if it contains no secret provisions, seems to look toward Soviet intervention if needed to keep the present regime in power.

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33. Our effort in further talks with Barzani's representatives should thus be to keep their expectations within limits of reality and which can be satisfied within the bounds of plausible denial, and to counsel them against actions likely to escalate to an international confrontation.

34. The modalities of providing financial and military support depend upon the degree of secrecy desired, the level of military capability we wish to provide, and the collateral objectives we wish to achieve.

35. Unlike arms, money can be provided either directly or indirectly, with minimal problems of clandestinity. We might find it in our interest to provide some financial assistance [REDACTED] the Iranians to reinforce their feelings of participation as well as for security reasons. We might also find it useful to pass some funds directly to the Kurds to enhance our own influence, as well as to provide some measure of unilateral control and a device for intelligence exploitation. The mechanics of acquiring the required currency and passing it to the Kurds in Iraq and elsewhere can be worked out.

36. Arms are another matter, and we already have indicated to the Kurds that most of our assistance might have to be via third parties. Geography makes Iran an essential intermediary in any arms delivery system.

[REDACTED]

Security

37. In our own planning we shall strive for maximum security in our arrangements. The multilateral nature of our involvement, however, will impose obstacles to complete secrecy, and we may in the event have to settle simply for plausible denial. The Kurds themselves

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are too divided and penetrated to keep major secrets from sophisticated foreign intelligence organizations, and some of the third parties involved are prone to leaks. Since we have already been accused by the Ba'thi regime of helping their enemies, our concern should be only that no exploitable evidence be provided to support hostile charges. These would continue even if we were to do nothing.

38. On 4 July 1972, for example, Baghdad Radio in its domestic service broadcast a commentary attacking Secretary Rogers' tour of the Middle East as a link in a series of suspicious moves to develop plots against the Arab nation, especially since Iraq liberated its oil wealth on 1 June. Other "suspicious links" in this chain of world imperialist plots have been described by Baghdad as President Nixon's visit to Tehran in May and a "criminal incident" engineered by imperialist and oil company agents in the Sinjar district in northern Iraq on 3 July.

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Soviet Involvement:

39. There is a definite possibility of increased Soviet involvement in support of the Ba'thi regime if hostilities begin with the Kurds, or even if the Iraqis anticipate the initiation of hostilities. The Soviets now have a great stake in Iraq, carved out originally during the Qasim period 1958-63, maintained despite setbacks under the original Ba'thi anti-communist government of February - November 1963, greatly expanded since 1968, and culminating in the alliance of April 1972.

40. Soviet military and economic aid to Iraq since the overthrow of the monarchy in July 1958 has been second only to that provided to the UAR. Even during the months following the Ba'thi coup of 8 February 1963 against Qasim, when the Ba'th was executing communists by the hundreds and the Soviet Union was denouncing their movement as Fascist, the Soviets did not terminate their involvement with the Iraqi army or with the many economic projects which they had launched. They estimated that eventually any Iraqi regime, dependent on Soviet cooperation for ammunition and spares for its Soviet equipped army and air force, would have no choice but to restore relations to cooperative levels. The Soviets were correct. The first Ba'thi government and its non-Ba'thi and radical Ba'thi successors have become increasingly beholden to the Soviet Union.

41. The acceleration of Soviet influence on Iraq since early this year is a source for special concern. After having provided the Iraqis the money and technical expertise to bring the confiscated North Rumaila oil field into production, the Soviets consolidated their favorable position with the Treaty of Friendship and Cooperation signed on 9 April. Three articles of that Treaty are as follows:

Article 8: In case of emergence of conditions that threaten violation of the peace, the two signatories will immediately hold contacts in order to coordinate their stands to eliminate the danger and restore the peace.

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Article 9: In the interest of security of the two countries, the two signatories will continue to develop cooperation for consolidating the defense capability of each other.

Article 10: Each of the two signatories declares that it will not enter into pacts, or take part in any international groupings or any actions or measures aimed at the other signatory. Each of the two signatories also pledges not to allow the use of its territory in undertaking any action that would result in a military harm to the other. (Text from Arab World Weekly, 15 April 1972, translated from Arabic Text published by the official Iraq News Agency.)

42. The Soviets were active in promoting a detente between the Iraqi Ba'thi regime and the Ba'thi regime in Syria, which had been its bitter enemy in their internecine struggle for party hegemony. The Soviets also promoted better relations between Iraq and the UAR. They were instrumental in promoting a coalition of Iraqi political factions, including the Communists and formerly pro-Nasir nationalists, in a National Front under Ba'thi leadership. The Soviets, including Kosygin himself, have tried to persuade Barzani to join the Front. Their efforts indicate the importance they attach to shoring up the Ba'thi regime, which has given them so much and is so aggressive in attacking Western interests in the area.

43. SAVAK has had reports that Iraqi paratroops are training in the vicinity of Mosul and Kirkuk with Soviet officers and advisers present. During the civil war in Yemen, when the Soviet-backed Republican government troops were hard pressed by the royalist forces, the Soviets provided Soviet pilots to help in the emergency. Soviet pilots and planes were also deployed in the UAR when Israeli deep-penetration raids proved to be more than the Egyptians could cope with. It is not unlikely, therefore, that if they should judge the Ba'thi regime is seriously threatened, the Soviets would send some forces in -- even "Kurdish volunteers" from their reservoir of Kurds -- to help the Ba'th and protect the Soviet investment in Iraq. They might also mount a political, diplomatic, and propaganda campaign in support of their Iraqi clients.

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44. The Soviets would probably wish to avoid a confrontation with Iran which would jeopardize the advantages they have gained with the Shah in recent years. They might, however, estimate that they could frighten him off and that even if he were angered at Soviet threats of intervention or actual intervention, he would be even more upset by the probable unwillingness or inability of his American allies to confront the Soviets on his behalf.

45. If, as a result of renewed Kurdish-Iraqi hostilities the Soviet Union were to send troops into Iraq or the Ba'th felt sufficiently menaced by such outside enemies as Iran, the Soviets might be invited to remain on Iraqi soil indefinitely. The presence of operational Soviet ground and air forces inside Iraq on a scale comparable to that in Egypt could at some future date provide just the degree of reliable support required for a communist-dominated power group to seize power from the Ba'th. Now in Iraq the Soviets are pressing all parties to join a National Front. Their treaty and the developing situation may provide the other ingredient for an eventual power-play -- namely, a Soviet military presence.

Turkish Attitude

46. The Turkish aspect of the proposed operation requires further study. The Turks are acutely sensitive to any manifestations of Kurdish nationalism on their borders. Three million Kurds, nearly half of the world's total, live in Turkey. Although the Kurds have been vigorously suppressed and are now called "Mountain Turks," they are still regarded by the Turks as a serious potential threat to internal stability and the integrity of the state. Despite Turkish dislike for the Ba'thi regime and its alliance with the Soviet Union, the Turkish government is likely to see militant Kurdish nationalism as a more immediate threat than the Ba'th to its peace and security. On 25 June 1970, when Iraqi President Al-Bakr passed through Ankara, he conferred with Turkish leaders on the Kurdish problem.

[REDACTED] The Turks are apprehensive of Kurdish aspirations eventually to establish a Greater Kurdistan, including territories and populations from parts of Iraq, Iran, and Turkey. [REDACTED]

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Kurdish Factionalism:

47. The Kurds of Iraq are far from being united in support of Mulla Mustafa Barzani. Deep factional cleavages rooted in tribal, political and social conflicts divide the Kurds into competing and mutually hostile groups. This situation poses problems of effectiveness and especially of security in any program to provide assistance to Barzani.

48. Barzani has played the preeminent role in Kurdish efforts to gain autonomy within Iraq. He was the leader of the Kurdish revolt of 1943 and the military commander of Ghazi Muhammad's "Mahabad Republic" on Iranian soil in 1946. He has led the Kurdish military effort against the Baghdad government since 1961. He has become not only a Kurdish leader, but a world figure.

49. Within the Kurdish movement, however, there are many counter-currents which have limited Barzani's attempts to unify Kurdish efforts. These currents are likely to endure and continue to weaken Kurdish military and political initiatives.

50. The most fundamental sources of division lie in traditional tribal rivalries. Barzani himself is not a tribal leader, but a religious one, a Mulla. His "Barzani" followers are not, strictly speaking, a tribe, but Kurds who inhabit the Barzan region of Northeastern Iraq and who follow Barzani. Several important Kurdish tribes have opposed him actively, and others have passively refused to support or oppose him. The Baghdad government under Qasim and his successors was able to pit elements of the Zibari, Harki, and Baradost tribes against Barzani. Qasim even organized a Kurdish cavalry unit,

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the Saladin Brigade, which he used for attacks on Kurdish rebels and their villages. Despite this background of divisiveness, however, Barzani has wider support among Kurds today than any other Kurdish leader.

51. A second kind of divisiveness lies in the conflicting political orientations of factions within the Kurdish Democratic Party (KDP), of which Barzani has been President since shortly after returning from the Soviet Union to Iraq in 1958. There are strong dissident elements within the KDP, many of them Marxist, which often have challenged Barzani's leadership and from 1958 to 1960 succeeded in making the Party's program practically identical with that of the Communist Party of Iraq, except for its Kurdish autonomy aspects. Many of the Kurdish political and guerrilla leaders who hold Marxist views are better educated and more cosmopolitan than the supporters of Barzani. One of these, Ibrahim Ahmed, has been a leading figure in the Communist movement in Iraq. Another Barzani rival, Jalal Talabani, while not a Communist, has challenged Barzani several times in the past. While he has temporarily accepted Barzani's leadership, there is little doubt that he will again assert himself when a favorable opportunity presents itself. Some Kurds are undoubtedly Soviet agents who will keep the Soviets informed of all plans and activities to which they become privy.

52. Barzani is 69 years old. While he is still vigorous, it is obvious that his own years of leadership are limited. Some of his own sons, notably the eldest, Lugman, and another, Ubaydallah, have sold out to the Baghdad government. He is actively supported by his sons Idris and Ma'sud. Ma'sud leads his intelligence organization. Idris has handled contacts for enlisting outside support. Neither of them have the charisma of their father, and they appear unlikely candidates to take over leadership of the Kurdish movement after him. Such leadership is more likely to pass to Jalal Talabani or someone like him.

53. Our awareness of the deep factional differences among the Kurds does not preclude providing Barzani or others with covert assistance as part of an effort to blunt Ba'thi and Soviet offensives against our friends and interests. Knowledge of Kurdish divisions should, however,

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keep us from having illusions that support of Barzani would enable him to control the entire northern region of Iraq and make the kinds of arrangements for exploiting its resources which Barzani's emissaries projected.

Department of State Plans to Staff an Interests Section in the Belgian Embassy Baghdad with American Personnel

54. The Department of State is preparing to place an FS0-4 and an administrative assistant in the U.S. Interests Section of the Belgian Embassy in Baghdad about 1 September 1972. (The Iraqis have maintained two people in Washington despite their diplomatic break with us in June 1967.) The placement and retention of American officials in Baghdad would be jeopardized if the Iraqis become aware of our support of the Kurds.



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CONCLUSIONS

56. The threat to moderate Middle-Eastern governments and to western interests posed by the Soviet-backed Iraqi Ba'thi regime warrants helping Barzani maintain his opposition to that regime.

57. Regardless of his own plans, Barzani may have hostilities forced upon him by a pre-emptive Iraqi military offensive. In that case he will need some basic defense supplies on a priority basis.

58. Our contribution to Barzani, whether in money or material, should be provided with the maximum administrative and physical security of which we are capable, recognizing that multi-lateral involvement inevitably will involve security complications.

59. Our financial and materiel contributions should be kept on a scale consistent with plausible denial. If our assistance goes beyond certain dimensions it will not be possible to maintain plausible denial.

60. As a complementary effort, we should explore the feasibility of exploiting directly or indirectly non-Kurdish elements in the Iraqi political scene.

61. Multi-national involvement in supporting Barzani and other elements opposed to the Ba'thi regime, requires coordination of the efforts of all parties in order to enhance security and effectiveness and to avoid working at cross-purposes.

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